

CHAPTER THIRTY

Description of Yoga with Eight Limbs¹

Skanda said:

1. Having heard the procedure of the worship of Vāsudeva in this way, Nārada became pleased. He addressed again the supreme preceptor of sages.

Nārada said:

2. The Kriyā-Yoga bestowing the great fruit (i.e. liberation from Saṁsāra) has been properly elucidated by Your Lordship. It should be practised with concentrated mind by persons desirous of *Siddhi (Mokṣa)*.

3. O excellent preceptor! But control of the mind is very difficult to be achieved even by persons endowed with knowledge. What can one say about those men whose minds are involved in Karmas in this world!

4. Except that (i.e. control of the mind) the worship of Hari is not conducive to desired fruit. Hence it behoves you to expound to me the means of controlling it.

Skanda said:

5. Thus enquired by the sage, Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of sages, the omniscient friend of Nara, spoke to Nārada.

Śrī Nārāyaṇa said:

6. O sage! What you state is true. The mind has immense power. Even if it is subdued, thoughtful people place no faith in it as in an enemy.

7. In the case of embodied beings, there is no enemy comparable to mind. Through the yogic practice of meditation on Viṣṇu it becomes free from defects and gets quiescent.

1. This chapter is based on Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*.

8. As it is very difficult to bring it under control like an untamed horse, it is to be controlled with firm, virtuous means by men endowed with disaffection for worldly pleasures.

9. There are many means (for this purpose), but out of them, according to the view of saints, the practice of Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga ('Yoga of eight limbs') is the most important and giver of immediate fruit.

10. O Brāhmaṇa, *Yama* (moral restraints), *Niyama* (voluntary religious observances); *Āsana* (bodily postures), control of breath, *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawing from objects of pleasure), *Dhāraṇā* (fixing the mind on one object), the seventh *Aṅga Dhyāna* (abstract contemplation) and *Samādhi* (perfect absorption of the mind in the Supreme Spirit), the eighth—this is the order (of successive steps) in Yoga.

11. Among them nonviolence, celibacy, truth, non-stealing and non-possession—these five are *Yamas*. They are to be practised with effort.

12. Purity, penance, contentment, study of Vedas and worship of Viṣṇu—these five *Niyamas* constitute the second *Aṅga*.

13. Giving up unsteadiness of the body and maintaining it in a comfortable position as in *Svastika* and other postures is called *Āsana* and it conquers the mental distress from pairs of opposites (such as pleasure and pain).

14. Holding at one place the vital breaths that wander everywhere, according to the method advised by the spiritual preceptor, is called *Prāṇāyāma* ('breath control').

15-16. When the wind (i.e. vital breath) is unsteady, the mind gets unsteady. When it (i.e. the vital breath) is steady, the mind gets steady. This should always be practised in a pure place by means of *Pūraka* (inhalation), *Kumbhaka* (i.e. holding within the inhaled air), *Recaka* (exhalation).

The backward pull of the mind and the propensities of the sense-organs from their respective objects is called *Pratyāhāra*.

17. Fixation of the mind along with the vital breath in the form of Vāsudeva in different places (i.e. Yogic plexuses) from the navel (*Mūlādhāra Cakra*) to other places is called *Dhāraṇā*.

18. The (progressive) meditation on each part of the Lord's person separately beginning from his lotus-feet is called *Dhyāna*.

19. The absorption (holding in) of the vital breath and the mind in Hari with deep love is called *Samādhi*. It is very much coveted by Yogins.

20. This Yoga is accomplished by men who have been trained in these eight Aṅgas by spiritual preceptors who themselves have been *Siddhas* ('Masters of Yoga'). It consists of perfection of *Samādhi*.

21. O Nārada! Know that there is no other proper means of controlling the mind like this in case of men desirous of liberation from Samsāra.

22. There is absolutely no fear to Yogins from Madana ('god of Love') who is the arch-enemy of performers of penance and the agitator of the universe.

23. A knower of Yoga avoids the coming time of death and quite independently gives up his body by (entering into) *Samādhi*.

24. By pressing the anus by both of his heels and gradually drawing up the vital breath between the two feet, he takes it to the position of death (*Mṛtyu*).

25. Meditating upon Keśava with his mind and muttering his six-syllabled Mantra (i.e. *keśavāya namaḥ*), he takes his vital breath to the position of *Prajāpati* (in his own body).

26. A knower of Yoga, a devotee of Vāsudeva draws the breath up to the navel, heart, chest, and throat and the (middle of the) eyebrows. (These parts of the body indicate the different Yogic plexuses, Cakras, in the body from Mūlādhāra to Ājñā Cakra.)

27. A Yogī practices withholding (control) and releasing of Prāṇa (vital breath), mind and senses in these six places (*Cakras*) one by one till he has that independence (and ability to do so).

28. Conquering each place one by one and leaving it behind, he proceeds to the next (higher) post. He who has reached the sixth place (i.e. Ājñācakra) has no trouble and fatigue in that practice.

29. After closing down the seven apertures and bringing the vital breath accompanied with the senses and mind to the crown of the head,¹ a knower of Yoga advances to (the aperture in the crown of the head called) *Brahma-randhra*.

30. Then after giving up desires for all Māyic objects, he identifies his mind with Vāsudeva and abandons his mortal coil.

31. Then coming to the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa which is beyond darkness, he, endowed with a celestial body, lives in bliss, serving the Lord.

32. Thus, O Brāhmaṇa, the epitome of the science of Yoga has

1. I have thus translated *Tālu* on the basis of Yogic Texts, even though the dictionary meaning of *Tālu* is *Palate*.

been narrated to you. Conquering your mind thereby propitiate him forever.